A GUIDE TO PORT HAWAIʻI

Hawaiʻi’s growth and evolution is steeped in maritime history. The Hawaiian Islands themselves grew from the floor of the Pacific Ocean by volcanic activity and, today, cover a distance of some 1,000 miles. The oldest island, Midway, lies at the northwest end of the chain with the “Big Island” of Hawaiʻi, from which the entire state takes its name, at the southern end of the chain.

From the time of the first Polynesian voyagers’ landing on the Hawaiian Islands around 750 A.D., through Captain James Cook’s “discovery” of the islands in 1778, the great whaling era of 1820 to 1860, the establishment of sugar plantations and their use of immigrant labor and the intoxicating success of the visitor industry, Hawaiʻi’s development and growth has been anchored in the sea. Over time, Hawaiʻi’s leaders realized that the islands’ thirst for commerce required systematic development and consistent management of its harbor facilities. The transformation of these private landings and piers into PORT HAWAIʻI was marked by rapid growth and constant change. The Harbors Division continues to persevere in its efforts to improve its commercial harbor system.

PORT HAWAIʻI consists of 10 commercial harbors on six major Hawaiian Islands—Oʻahu, Maui, Molokaʻi, Lānaʻi, the “Big Island” of Hawaiʻi, and Kauaʻi.

ISLAND OF OʻAHU

HONOLULU HARBOR

Because Hawaiʻi’s geographic isolation mandates that nearly all imported goods arrive via island ports, Honolulu Harbor bears the awesome responsibility of serving as hub of PORT HAWAIʻI from where inter-island cargo distribution branches out to serve the neighbor islands. Honolulu Harbor is a natural harbor created through the restriction of coral growth by the fresh water pouring into it from Nuʻuanu Stream. The early native inhabitants referred to the harbor as Ke Awa O Kon or the “harbor of Kou.” The harbor was later renamed as Honolulu. Honolulu Harbor’s first wharf was just a sunken ship’s hull that was floated into place near the foot of Nuʻuanu Avenue. Ladd & Company used this crude docking structure for eight years.

Honolulu Harbor, among the largest container handling ports in the United States with over 8 million short tons
of cargo handled annually, is the island’s primary commercial and transportation center in the PORT HAWAII system. Located on the southern coast of Oahu, it is the primary shipping link between Hawaii and the Mainland United States, Far East and the entire Pacific Rim. Honolulu Harbor is an improved natural harbor that is well protected from wind and surge action. Most of the state’s containerized cargo is received here where it is then distributed to its final destination. Other commodities handled include: liquid- (e.g., petroleum products) and dry-bulk (e.g., aggregates) cargos, neo-bulk cargo (e.g., construction materials such as lumber) and break-bulk cargo (e.g., miscellaneous general cargo). In addition, Honolulu Harbor provides facilities for passenger, excursion, research and fishing vessels.

Honolulu International Airport, located about 3 miles west of Honolulu Harbor’s Sand Island container facilities, further augments PORT HAWAII’s services to shippers and shipping lines by offering easy access to and from the neighboring harbor. The intermodal transfer of cargo is enhanced by this proximity. Honolulu Airport provides flights to and from virtually every major city of the Pacific Rim. Linking Honolulu Harbor to the Honolulu Airport is Nimitz Highway.

**KALAELOA BARBERS POINT HARBOR**

Kalaeloa, translated means “the long point.” From its early history, it was a sparsely populated and barren place. In 1796, the British brig *Arthur*, commanded by Captain Henry Barber, was grounded on a coral reef in high surf conditions. Kalaeloa was renamed Barbers Point after this ill-fated journey. The developers of Campbell Industrial Park constructed the first pier at Barbers Point Barge Basin to enable businesses to ship their products directly to the neighbor islands.

PORT HAWAII’s most recently constructed harbor, Kalaeloa Barbers Point, is located approximately 19 nautical miles west of Honolulu Harbor near the southwestern tip of Oahu. Completed in 1990, its importance has grown as it has become the second busiest port in the state. Kalaeloa Barbers Point Harbor handles liquid- (i.e., petroleum products) and dry-bulk (i.e., coal, cement and scrap metal) cargos and provides space for ship maintenance and repair facilities.

Kalaeloa Barbers Point Harbor is served by Interstate Highway H-1 and Farrington Highway and is connected to Honolulu International Airport and downtown Honolulu by about 20 miles of high-capacity roadway.

**KEWALO BASIN**

Kewalo, translated means “the calling” or the “resounding.” It does not have the advantage of a naturally occurring geological formation that provides for the basic harbor requirements like Honolulu Harbor. Kewalo Basin is an artificial cove—a product of human construction activities—built into the former swamplands that surrounded the area in its early history. In 1921, construction of Kewalo Basin began to alleviate the congestion in Honolulu Harbor.

*Piers 10 and 11, Honolulu Harbor. A foreign cruise ship quietly berth there.*
Located one mile east of Honolulu Harbor, Kewalo Basin is O‘ahu’s third commercial harbor. It is used primarily for mooring of charter, excursion and commercial fishing boats, and other small miscellaneous boats such as catamarans and research vessels.

Kewalo Basin is located along Ala Moana Boulevard between Honolulu International Airport and Waikiki.

MAUI COUNTY

KAHULUI HARBOR • MAUI

The island of Maui can only lay claim to one commercial harbor, Kahului Harbor. Westerners discovered that the isthmus between Haleakalā and West Maui contained rich soils ideal for crop cultivation. The region soon supported one of the largest sugar plantations in the world. Kahului Harbor was started by the Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Company with the construction of a rubble-mound breakwater, the dredging of a basin, the installation of moorings and buoys, and the construction of a wharf for 1,000-ton vessels.

Kahului Harbor is located on the north shore of Maui, within Kahului Bay and approximately 89 nautical miles southeast of Honolulu Harbor. Kahului Harbor provides a complete range of maritime services and facilities to meet the island’s needs.

Kahului Harbor, a regular stop for passenger cruise ships, is situated near the city of Kahului, the industrial and commercial center of Maui. The harbor is just two miles from Wailuku, Maui’s largest town and the county seat of Maui County. Kahului Harbor is close to Kahului Airport with easy access to the island’s highway system.

KAUNAKAKAI HARBOR • MOLOKA‘I

In a 1923 report of the Board of Harbor Commissioners, Kaunakakai Wharf is listed as a privately owned facility. The island of Moloka‘i’s port facility was once a crude structure, consisting of two walls, twelve feet apart, built through the mud flats from the shoreline to a point 900 feet seaward. A near-shore basin was large enough for two boats. Vessels were to pass through this narrow channel and discharge their cargo in the basin at its shore end.

Kaunakakai Harbor is located on the south central shore of the island of Moloka‘i. It is located 52 nautical miles from Honolulu Harbor. It has facilities for inter-island barge operations and a passenger ferry terminal.
ISLAND OF HAWAI’I

HILO HARBOR

Hilo Harbor is one of two commercial harbors on the “Big Island.” Hilo Bay can be described as a broad indentation in the “Big Island’s” coastline. Hilo, translating from Hawaiian as “crescent moon,” accurately denotes the physical shape of the bay. The first recorded improvement to Hilo Harbor was a stone pier constructed by entrepreneur and merchant Thomas Spencer in 1861.

KAUMALAPAU HARBOR • LĀNA’I

Kaumalapau Harbor is the most recent addition to the PORT HAWAI’I system. Located on the southern shore of Lāna’i, it has facilities for inter-island barge operations. The Hawaiian Pineapple Company built Kaumalapau Harbor in 1926. The site for this harbor was chosen because it is closer to Honolulu than the alternate site at Mānele.

Hilo Harbor, located on the northeast coast of the “Big Island,” the southernmost island, is one of two deep-draft harbors servicing the island. Hilo Harbor is at Kūhiō Bay, itself a small extension of the larger Hilo Bay. The harbor is two miles from the business district of Hilo, the island’s principal city. Located 194 nautical miles southeast of Honolulu Harbor, Hilo Harbor provides a wide range of maritime facilities and services and is the major distribution center for the “Big Island.” Both overseas and inter-island ships and barges make regular calls at Hilo Harbor, in addition to scheduled passenger cruise ships.

The harbor is served by Kaumalapau Highway and is located 1 mile from Lāna’i City, the island’s largest population center.

A barge filled with lumber (also known as raw-bulk cargo) heading to Pier 2, Honomalai Harbor.

KAWAIHAE HARBOR

Although Kawaihao Harbor had a less prominent position in the development history of the “Big Island,” it has been important to the island’s maritime development for several hundred years. Westerners visited it as early as 1792 when Captain Vancouver landed there. Kawaihao Harbor was a whaling port as early as 1845 and had a pier there as early as the 1850s.
Kawaihae Harbor is the second deep-draft harbor on the “Big Island” and is located on the northwest coast of Hawai‘i, approximately 85 nautical miles from Hilo Harbor and 132 nautical miles from Honolulu Harbor. Kawaihae Harbor offers facilities for handling both overseas and inter-island cargo with room for future expansion. The harbor is strategically located to play a major role in the rapidly developing West Hawai‘i area.

The harbor is served by Queen Ka‘ahumanu Highway, and is located 28 miles north of Kona International Airport at Keahole that services the West Hawai‘i region.

ISLAND OF KAUA‘I

NĀWILIWILI HARBOR

Kaua‘i’s primary port is Nāwiliwili Harbor. Nāwiliwili Bay and its surrounding area provided fertile grounds for the early native inhabitants. Their economy was subsistence based, cultivating Taro and fish in ponds for their food source. By 1898, the first two piers were constructed: a Government landing on the west side of the bay and a privately built landing to the north.

Port Allen Harbor is Kaua‘i’s second commercial harbor and is located on the south coast of the island. Located 106 nautical miles from Honolulu Harbor, Port Allen Harbor has facilities for liquid-bulk (i.e., petroleum) cargo. Military and excursion/charter vessels also use the pier.

Port Allen Harbor is 20 miles from the Līhu‘e Airport. Waialoa Road provides access to the harbor from Kaumuali‘i Highway.
PORT HAWAI’I’S ROLE IN THE PACIFIC RIM

Today, Hawai‘i is a key transportation and communications center with an important role as the link to the Pacific Rim economies. An integral part of Hawai‘i’s participation in this role is PORT HAWAI‘I. The latest available figures show that PORT HAWAI‘I harbors account for 16.9 million short tons of cargo annually. Of that total, 2.3 short tons are of foreign origin. The development of two oil refineries at Campbell Industrial Park on West O‘ahu significantly impacted Hawai‘i’s trade patterns. Today, more than half of the state’s international trade focuses on petroleum products.

For the latest cargo statistics, please visit the State Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism’s website at www.hawaii.gov/dbedt.

![PORT HAWAI‘I’s mid-Pacific location also makes it an ideal fueling stop for trans-Pacific shipping. By taking on bunkers (or fueling activities) at PORT HAWAI‘I, shipping lines can carry more paying cargo at relatively little sacrifice in overall sailing time.](image)

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PORT CHARGES

All port charges are paid to the Harbors Division. There are four types of fees: port entry fees, wharfage charges, demurrage and dockage charges.

Most vessels entering PORT HAWAI‘I pay Port Entry Fees. Vessels are required to pay an entry fee based upon the harbor and length of vessel.

Wharfage Charges are paid by the shipping lines or consignees for cargo loaded or unloaded at a State-owned dock. The rates are set by type of cargo with four rate categories: incoming foreign overseas, incoming domestic overseas (i.e., from the mainland United States), outgoing overseas and inter-island shipment.

Demurrage is assessed for cargo and shipping devices remaining on a wharf, pier or terminal’s back-up area beyond the free time allowed for loading or unloading cargo.

Dockage Charges are assessed against vessels using a dock, dolphin (an isolated cluster of piles used for mooring) or other State-owned structure in PORT HAWAI‘I at rates per 24 hours based on the length of the vessel. Vessels utilizing dolphins are charged dockage at half price.

For complete and up-to-date tariff information, please visit our website at www.hawaii.gov/dot/adminrules.

Pilotage. Around-the-clock pilotage serves all harbors in the PORT HAWAI‘I system. All vessels not exempt from Hawai‘i’s pilotage law are required to take a pilot to anchorage. Additional support services, from stevedoring to security, from ship provisioning to medical services, are available.

Harbor pilots provide 24 hours-a-day pilotage services.
FOREIGN-TRADE ZONE

Hawai‘i’s Foreign-Trade Zone No. 9 facility located at Pier 2, Honolulu Harbor, is designed to allow companies to take advantage of the Foreign-Trade Zone program in a secure, shared-use facility. This facility is open to any business that imports or exports merchandise through PORT HAWAI‘I. Operated by the State of Hawai‘i, this facility is designed to help companies compete in international markets. Firms that utilize Foreign-Trade Zone No. 9 enjoy its special legal status of being outside of the Customs territory of the United States. These firms use the Zone to postpone and, in cases of re-export of cargo, avoid the application of U.S. Customs laws that impose duties, taxes, bonds, quotas and other requirements.

Hawai‘i’s Foreign-Trade Zone No. 9 at Pier 2 provides warehouse storage at monthly rates and rental of warehouse handling equipment and labor at hourly rates. Users may also rent warehouse space for merchandise assembly, manipulation, or manufacturing on a daily, monthly or annual basis. Office and exhibit space is also available for rent at the Zone. The Pier 2 cargo facility is located on Ala Moana Boulevard approximately 5.5 miles from Honolulu International Airport.

For more information on Hawai‘i’s Foreign-Trade Zone No. 9, please contact the Zone Administrator’s Office at:

Hawai‘i Foreign-Trade Zone #9
Pier 2, 521 Ala Moana Blvd.
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813
Telephone (808) 586-2507

Or visit its web site at www.ftz9.org.